

Old Provo Canyon hotel a popular getaway retreat

By BETH R. OLSEN

Special to The Daily Herald

If Hotel Heiselt in Provo Canyon existed today, it could probably be refurbished into the profitable business it was at the beginning of this century. Back then it offered all the desirable qualities of a quick getaway retreat — a cool canyon atmosphere on the banks of the Provo River surrounded by mountain scenery, two large fish ponds, delicious fresh food, rooms for the night, plus public transportation to the front door and much more.

In early 1903, Hyrum and Magdalena Heiselt, long-time Pleasant Grove residents, purchased a large, square, native-rock building from Enos Carter. It was about one mile up Provo Canyon on the north side of the river. The two-story, Gothic-Révil-style house with 16 dormer windows projecting from its Mansard roof appears to have had many rooms on the second floor. The building, unusually large for an ordinary house, contained a spacious dining room on the ground level.

At the time of the Heiselts' purchase, L.L. Nunn was building his

Olmstead Power Plant. The dam was located above the Heiselt property, and the flume ran two miles to the mouth of the canyon

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where the main power plant was built.

Heiselts' newly acquired property, consisting of 40 acres, was ideally located in the center of the length of Nunn's project. Workers found that making a daily round trip to the construction site from Utah County and more distant locations was impractical, so many boarded and roomed with the Heiselts.

Joe Fage and Harry Wadley of Pleasant Grove were typical of the workers who would leave their

homes very early Monday mornings, room with the Heiselts during the week and return home late Saturday evenings. They worked 10-hour days, six days a week constructing the 12-foot-high flume that ran along the mountainside where the metal pipe that replaced it still runs today. They also helped construct the buildings at Olmstead.

After the construction project was completed, the Heiselts converted their business into a canyon resort. The house was located almost against the mountainside up from the river. Hyrum built two large trout ponds and planted expansive lawns, sloping toward the river. He also built an octagon-shaped fountain on the east side of the building. With his ponds well stocked with trout, his coop filled with chickens, cows in the barn and plenty of room to house and feed customers, he launched into the hotel/restaurant business.

Hotel Heiselt catered to fashionably dressed, professional groups. People came from Salt Lake City by train to Provo and then boarded a D&RG excursion train that took them within a few yards of Hotel Heiselt. The train



Photo courtesy of Beth R. Olsen

Hotel Heiselt in Provo Canyon is bustling with activity during the U.P.A. Trout Banquet on Aug. 11, 1908. The hotel boasted breathtaking scenery, two

large fish ponds and delicious fresh food. The hotel was sold and later razed in 1921. The origin of the large hotel building is still in dispute.

had served excursion groups ever since a collection of picnickers had made a trial trip halfway up the canyon in the summer of 1898.

Hyrum took an eighth-section land grant to add to his canyon property. This gave him room to plant fruit trees and grow a large garden to provide vegetables for guests, grain for flour and alfalfa to

feed his cows and horses. Magdalena, called Lena, was an excellent cook, and with the help of their daughters, Vera and Ruby, and sometimes hired women, the Heiselts set tables with delicious meals that brought return crowds.

The Utah Pharmacy Association, pictured in 1908 on an advertising postcard, returned again and again. Max Jones, the Heiselts' grandson, remembers the last time

Chechen leader's escape is good news for Yeltsin

By JAMES P. GALLAGHER
Chicago Tribune

MOSCOW — The siege of Chechnya provides a good example of why reporting from Russia is so fascinating.

Things are never as they first appear; in fact, the truth often turns out to be the mirror image of what you'd expect.

You would think that President Boris Yeltsin would have hit the ceiling last week when Russian forces failed to capture the leader of the daredevil Lone Wolf brigade that rocked Moscow with a humiliating, 10-day hostage standoff in southern Russia.

But officials close to Yeltsin actually expressed relief that Salman Raduyev

escaped from Pervomayskaya after Russian missiles pulverized the village.

Why? Because of something called Adat, the ancient code of life and death in the Caucasus Mountains that demands blood vengeance when a relative is slain.

Raduyev is a son-in-law to top Chechen rebel Jokhar Dudayev. And even before the battle of Pervomayskaya, people in Yeltsin's inner circle were fretting that killing Raduyev could activate some tribal reflex and set in motion an obligation to kill the Russian leader or one of his kin.

Now, with Raduyev back in Chechnya, the risk that an ancient imperative might alter the course of history has passed — if such a danger ever existed.

Chechens acknowledge that the com-

mandment to avenge killings in kind still holds powerful sway among their proud, rugged people.

At the same time, most Chechens insist that Adat doesn't mandate blood feuds with outsiders such as the Russians, so even if Raduyev had been slain last week, Dudayev and his relatives would have been under no compulsion to retaliate against the Yeltsin family.

All that might be true, but many Russians are certain that the Chechens still believe deeply in an eye for an eye.

Indeed, many Russians nurse a racist stereotype of what the 19th Century writer Mikhail Lermontov once glorified as the "zloi Chechen" — the evil, malicious,

savage who fights with heroic courage, revels in treachery and doesn't know when to give up and make peace.

Such a distortion of reality gives the Chechens a great psychological advantage in their David vs. Goliath struggle for independence against the Russians, who vastly outnumber them and are much better armed.

In Chechnya last winter, I repeatedly encountered Russian officials and big, tough, machinegun-toting soldiers who refused to disclose their family names out of fear that the wily Chechens would somehow discover who they were and take revenge against their loved ones back home.

Officer after officer insisted that his last name was really Ivanov, the Russian equivalent of Smith, or maybe Doe.

This meaner-than-a-junkyard-dog image of the enemy helps explain why Russian forces have been so inept in 13 months of warfare in the tiny Islamic enclave — which is not to say that today's equipment, amateurish leadership, poor discipline and mind-boggling morale problems did not play the major role.

As often happens in the wacky realm of racism, the myth of the almost superhuman Chechen foe coexists with a completely opposite stereotype: the lazy, stupid, cowardly, dark-skinned Chechen who will sell out his compatriots at the first opportunity.

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